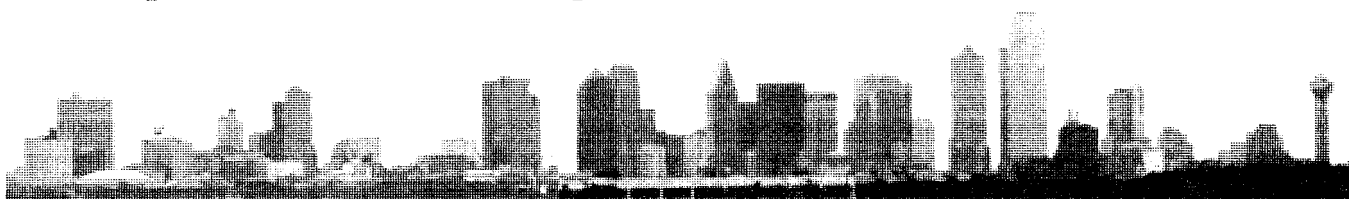


MCCC NEWS

Metroplex Commodore Computer Club



Fort Worth

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Dallas

High Speed Modems

faster and faster...
by Johnny C. Kitchens

Modems have become the common denominator of the computer world. No matter what kind of computer you have, connect a modem to it and you can communicate with any kind of computer that has one. All sorts of inventions have been given credit with shrinking the world, the modem shrinks it for everyone. Talk of the electronic superhighway made news and headlines everywhere recently, after the President gave it his backing. In much the same way as our roads and highways for the automobile got their modest start, the electronic superhighway owes its existence to the BBS people. At first, these two byways had modest beginnings for a few users needing a quick way to get around. As more people needed to get around and to travel greater distances a primitive system sprang to life. When the government got into the act, the Interstate highway system was created for the auto users. Before the electronic superhighway can accomplish the same thing, get more people more data efficiently, it will need one thing, SPEED! Something the modem manufacturers are trying to supply.

When I got into modems, 300 baud was the common speed and 1200 were new. My first modem was a 1200 baud modem for my C-128. I had to learn all sorts of new terms for computers. The first was baud, which gives you an idea of how many bits per second the modem can transfer. Most computer users learn that 8 bits equal 1 byte and 1 byte equals 1 character. So why does the character transfer speed not equal the baud rate? The modem does 10 bits for each character it sends. Throw in some other things and the characters transfer rate is slower than the best you can get, or at least that is the way it was. This transfer rate is usually expressed in terminal programs as CPS, or characters per second. My first call with my modem was startling. The sounds I heard at first really convinced me that I had made a mistake and the computer was dying. Turns out that is what it supposed to do. After a few days I was hooked. I

signed up with Q-Link and was talking to people all over the country. It was really hard to believe!

One of my first file transfers was a big one. It was over 250k in size! The time was estimated at over 45 minutes to send the file to me. Somewhere around the 44 minute mark my wife picked up the phone. Needless to say, I had to start over. That XMODEM sure was primitive. A few months later I got my Amiga and sold my 128. Unfortunately I had to go without a modem for awhile. I was really excited when I located a used 1200 baud modem for \$75. I had paid \$275 for the 1200 baud modem for the 128. Finding software to make it work took me clear across the Metroplex to get a copy of *ATerm*. Strangely enough, I made my first 300 baud connection after this. I couldn't believe how slow it was. I believe we got about 25cps. At 1200 baud the transfers were over 110cps. That is a noticeable difference! What I didn't know was that greater speeds were around the corner. Transferring files on the Amiga introduced me to file compression or archives. I went through ARC, ZOO, ZIP, and LhARC. Each new one introduced improvements in compression and speed. Later LZ, LhA, Shrink, and an improved ZIP showed up. There were even whole disk archivers. Warp, Zap, and DMS all gave me new things to learn about Transferring files.

Just 9 months later Supra shocked everyone by offering a 2400 baud modem for under \$100. They were hard to get, but I finally got one. With transfers of over 230cps, text and files were really moving into my computer. Suddenly 1200 seemed slow. The Supra served me for 4 months when I came upon a used 9600 baud modem. I watched it run for awhile and knew that it was the way to go. It was a U.S. Robotics 9600 HST modem. If you haven't seen one of these, they are something to behold. They are larger than just about any modem around. Part of the advantage of this though, is it allowed them to put all of the commands on the bottom of the modem. It has one other great advantage over other

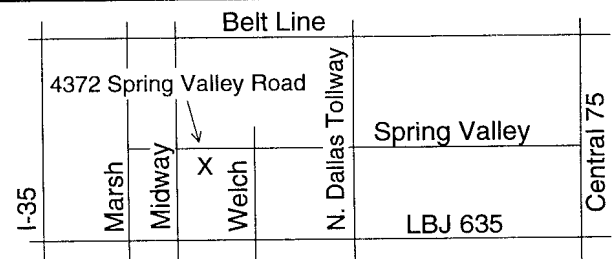
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modems — it has a volume control! It was also large enough for me to decide to add a shelf on the side of my desk just for it, though admittedly other things have a tendency to migrate there. U.S. Robotics came up with their own transfer setup called HST, and it became very popular as I was to discover. The asking price was \$600. I bought it and made a new friend. It was worth the trouble just for that!

This modem introduced me to all sorts of new things and problems. The software I was using, had no phone book or any of the advanced transfer protocols like ZMODEM. ZMODEM, I was told, didn't have that XMODEM problem — it can restart a file right where it left off, if there are any interruptions. I was introduced to *JR-Comm* and before long I discovered the need for CTS/RTS. What is that? That is what I said! Let's just say it's what every fast modem needs. Without it errors occur and the speed drops. I discovered that ZMODEM made file transfers so easy that anyone can do it. I discovered that data compression built into the modem made it faster than it should be. I was getting around 1180cps after I got everything set right. Strange — the modem is 4 times faster than 2400 baud modems, but I'm getting 5 times faster cps. This modem really got things moving for me and others. Several BBS operators invited me over so they could try my modem out on their BBS. I thought it might be educational, and gave it a shot. Like me, they needed only to see it operate for a moment, and they had to have one. During this time the first V.32 modems showed up in the area. The V.32 modems run at 9600 baud, but to my dismay I could only connect at 2400 baud with them. U.S. Robotics had introduced HST after seeing a need for a high speed modem, but it was taking too long for a standard to be set up. V.32 was that standard. U.S. Robotics came up with an idea to cover all bases. They introduced a modem called the Dual-Standard. It featured HST and V.32. This was the modem that my friend was getting to replace the one he sold me. In order to keep their speed advantage U.S. Robotics upped the HST speed to 14400 baud. That equates to about 1670cps. Though I wanted one they were very expensive! It wasn't long after that, V.32 was updated to V.32bis. This updated it from 9600 to 14400 baud. Also, some other improvements were introduced to improve transfers — V.42, an error correction protocol, and V.42bis, a data compression setup. Both of these were improvements over the previous setups. V.42bis showed up on some 2400 baud modems allowing them to advertise as 9600 baud modems. As long as they transferred uncompressed data they were fast, but send a compressed file and they were no faster than an ordinary 2400 baud modem. I found out that I could get a refurbished Dual-Standard for roughly half the price of a new one. The one I got had V.32bis and 14400 HST. I could now call any high speed BBS and get a high speed connection.

Things were really moving along. Bulletin boards were switching to high speed modems right and left. Using a board running at 2400 would really try my patience. As the speed of the modem increased, something unforeseen began to show up. The Amiga's serial port was showing its age. At the time of its

introduction, 2400 baud modems were high tech. Why would anyone need it to run as fast as the Amiga's serial port could? Running faster than 19200 with a stock 68000 cpu is hard. Running faster than 38400 with an accelerator is just as hard. The 4000 can run 57600, but works better at 38400. I was discovering these limitations. Doing certain things such as scrolling text would stop a high serial port setting every time it seemed. Some ask, why run the serial port faster than the modem? The reason has to do with the data compression. Anytime the data comes through in an uncompressed form the high speed modems compress it for even greater speed. Using V.42bis the compression ratio can be as high as 4 to 1. With that you need the serial port set at 4 times the speed of the modem, just so that the data can get out of the modem fast enough to maintain speed. One of the best things about the Amiga was suffering...multitasking. Doing other things would slow the serial operations down it seemed every time. The cure came in the form of a serial card. Some developers realized the Amiga's serial port was getting a bit old, and the Amiga's multitasking could allow multiple serial port operations. This was an amazing development to say the least. Suddenly the Amiga could handle multiple phone lines for bulletin boards. I acquired a used board from Check Point Technologies called, appropriately enough, the Serial Solution. Though this board has two serial ports, I never used the second. My need was for the improved performance. This card has the 68681 DUART chip from Motorola doing the serial port operations. It features a 4 byte FIFO buffer. The Amiga has just one byte in its buffer. It's a tribute to the Amiga that it can run the serial port so fast with this small buffer. With a 4 byte buffer, the Serial Solution can run up to 115200 baud, so the maker advertised. By the time I picked this card up, no one had heard from Check Point since 1989...nearly a two year stretch. Strangely enough, their phone still rang...just no answer. The board did work fine, so I didn't really worry about it.

In the meantime, U.S. Robotics updated HST to a new speed of 16800 plus they reduced the size of the modem to almost half, and still kept the commands printed on the bottom! I purchased the 16800 HST and the smaller size really catches your attention when it's seen next to the older model. Connecting with another 16800 HST for the first time was a real thrill. Everything really moved! Menus, files, and E-Mail all zipped right along on the screen. With my serial card I was able to run the needed 57600 baud on the serial port. With this combination my transfer rate was up to 2050 cps! If you haven't used an HST modem, the differences between it and the V.32bis modems are small in the way they operate. Each have their advantages and disadvantages. HST connects and retrains faster than V.32bis. HST is a synchronous transfer setup and V.32bis is an asynchronous transfer setup, allowing it to send info equally fast in both directions. Admittedly, we've yet to get a good use of that feature. At the same speed, HST is faster. U.S. Robotics have given their modems the most complete diagnostic command set I've ever seen. You can check everything that happened during the previous

connection. Unfortunately for U.S. Robotics, the V.32bis modem's lower price appears to have won the comparison.

Soon there was news of a new speed standard in the works. It was unofficially called V.FAST which would run at 28800 baud. One of the amazing things I kept hearing as I picked up my first fast modem was that the phone lines can't handle anything faster than 2400 baud. One guy insisted that I was wasting my money trying to run any faster than 2400 baud. Here was a modem standard that was 12 times that speed! Remembering how long V.32 took to get set up, V.FAST should take quite a while as well. It wasn't long till they gave it an official name — V.34. With that, came rumors of V.34bis — a 31200 baud standard. Several setups appeared almost overnight to fill the time till V.34 appeared. One was V.32terbo, an enhanced version of V.32bis. It ran at a speed of 19200 baud. Motorola introduced a modem it called V.FAST with its own version of the future standard — a real speed demon. Without a large following, they didn't stand a chance. V.32terbo got some following with AT&T and U.S. Robotics getting behind it. Then Hayes and Rockwell introduced something new. It's called V.FC with the FC meaning "Fast Class." This setup had a real advantage in the number of supporters and the claim that it could be updated to the V.34 standard whenever it should show up. So many modem vendors have joined the V.FC club that it has been dubbed a pre-standard. Apparently other companies have had a hand in the Rockwell chipset as well, such as Microcom supplying its MNP 10. This could, in part, explain the rapid acceptance, as well as the availability, of a complete chipset to make a 28800 modem design even easier. V.32terbo hasn't exactly disappeared. After checking through several ads, I came across 13 modems using it. V.FC supporters claim 125 companies have joined up. I found 12, with U.S. Robotics supporting both in their new modem they've dubbed the v.everything. So far, all of the V.FC modems have claimed simple upgrades to V.34 when its finalized. The finalized version of V.34 has just been announced and a few new items were included. This has started some speculation that the upgrade may be costlier than first predicted. Some are speculating more than just a ROM will be needed for the move to V.34. The manufacturers have also claimed that V.34 and V.FC will be able to communicate, but they have yet to say how well! There are only a few out there, but not all V.FC modems are 28800 baud. There are a few 24000 and 26400 baud ones — though they may be lower in price, they probably won't be around for long.

Earlier this year I was given a chance to purchase a V.FC modem at a very good price! The modem was the Hayes Optima 288 V.FC + Fax. While this modem has nothing unusual about hooking it up and most operations, it does have one failing. The manual is lacking in many areas. Many commands lack explanations of their use, and there are even more commands that aren't listed at all! On the other hand the Hayes modem specifications are tops for the class. While most of the modems have 2k of internal RAM, the Hayes has 16k. The Hayes DTE rate is 230400 — twice the speed of all other modems in this class. The V.42bis has been enhanced to an 8 to 1 compression rate. So far this only works when connected

to other Hayes Optima 288s. My first problem came with the serial card. It refused to run properly faster than 57600. Obviously the old software needs some updating. The fact that the Hayes can use a 230400 serial port speed convinced me that a GVP ioExtender would be added in the future. The ioExtender can run up to 625000 baud, so it should be good for many years to come. In the meantime, the older card would have to do at 57600, or so I thought. A problem that I had not experienced, but had bothered other people with high speed modems showed up. CRC errors kept showing up on file downloads. It was also random, appearing sometimes, sometimes not. These errors even happened on 14400 baud connections. The

***File transfers can be anywhere
from 2600 to 3300 cps on
compressed files. Going over 3000
will put a smile on your face!***

error really plagues GVP hard drive controllers — so much so that a patch was created for them to break up data blocks into smaller sizes, from 1024 bytes to 512 bytes. This lessens the load on the buss. *Terminus* has a similar feature built into it. Although I've seen various reasons for the problem, it appears that the GVP controller is mastering the buss too much. I was really baffled why I needed it now running at lower speeds. A further mystery came up when I saw the Optima connected to a 3000 running at 115200 on the built-in serial port. I had always heard 38400 was the top. I decided to try it on my 2500. I couldn't believe it — it worked! I couldn't do anything else it seems...even flipping screens slowed it down. My guess is that it has to do with the Hayes built in buffer. It's another one of those things not talked about in the manual. If you're wondering if it's really twice as fast as the V.32bis, the answer is sort of a yes. V.FC and the soon-to-be-released V.34 share a very useful feature. They can actually check the line and decide on an optimum speed for the line connection. Because of this, getting a 28800 connection doesn't happen all the time. It took several tries in a row before the first 28800 connection took place. Even with a 28800 initial connection the speed can readjust while on-line. I have to say 21600 is probably the average connection for most tries. Even with less than optimum connections the speed difference is quite noticeable. Complicated graphics that took a while to draw at 14400 really move onto the screen. File transfers can be anywhere from 2600 to 3300 cps on compressed files. Going over 3000 will put a smile on your face! Regular text files really move. I'm not sure of what the top speed will be — I've always run out of file while the cps rate is still climbing. My highest so far was an exciting 10000+cps!

My first improvement to performance came when I tried a IVS Grand Slam. The Grand Slam turned out to

be faster than the GVP card — and it eliminated the CRC errors. I guess there is a way for a hard drive controller to work fast without mastering the buss so much. Finding other V.FC modems to connect to was another problem. There were only a few. Hayes operates a BBS with a toll free number. Using that gave me a feel for long distance performance. The connections have been all over the available range. One memorable connection took over 50 seconds of negotiation between the two modems before a 14400 connection finally took place. Strangely enough, a board in Grapevine gives me almost consistent 28800 connections to my Arlington location. I can't get that with another modem here in Arlington! I have to say that connections less than 28800 baud should point out less than optimum phone lines as well as less than optimum setups. I've noticed that many V.FC modems are having trouble getting data to and from the computer they are connected to. This has more to do with the serial port and OS on their system than anything else. Running a high speed modem on a PC using Windows really shows some system limitation. Hayes has addressed the problem with a card called the ESP. It can run at up to 925000 baud. So far I've yet to connect to system running one. Everyone I've connected to is less than optimum setup so speed has been less than it could be. Another problem was that of random carrier loss. For no apparent reason the connection would be dropped. The cure turned out to be one of those hidden commands. Hayes has given the V.42bis, the data compression protocol, an 8k dictionary. Most modems have only a 2k dictionary. Due to this the Hayes overwhelms them and they drop carrier. Setting S146 to 2k fixed it. The Optima does shine for me when connecting with most V.32bis modems. I've noticed a quicker connect time and improved transfer speed. Many approach 1750 cps in compressed data. The Optima has received top numbers in all the magazine tests I've seen. One figure that showed up in two separate tests pointed out that it was 23% faster than the slowest V.FC modem. Hayes certainly got the speed right!

The need for all of this speed in modems is showing up on the Internet. Though there are compressed files to

get, quite a bit of the data isn't compressed: text, pictures, and huge menu files. A 2400 baud modem would take forever to get anywhere in there. Let me assure you, if you have yet to try it, there is a lot of data to go through. It appears to go on and on!

So how fast is V.FC compared to what exists? Here's a listing for sending a compressed file of 100k with speeds running from 2400 to 28800 baud.

Baud	CPS	Seconds to Transfer
2400	230	435
9600	1180	85
12000	1430	70
14400	1680***	60
16800	2050*	49
19200	2270**	44
21600	2590**	39
24000	2940**	34
26400	3100**	32
28800	3300**	30

* Best I've seen. **Could be higher! ***I've seen higher!

Based on how well the file is compressed and/or what it is will give different speeds. In other words, your results may vary.

The last thing I've noticed about these new modems is their price. The price on them has dropped very quickly. Already a few have showed up with prices under \$200. One advantage to this is that all high speed modem's prices should drop pretty quick now. You won't have much of a reason to keep that 2400 much longer.

I'm not sure what the future holds for the modem. Rumors of the V.34bis for higher speeds, fiber optic connections, and even cable-based transfer systems are in the works. If the last five years are an indication of what could be developed, then the year 2000 looks exciting for telecommunications. I just wish the Amiga could be there to show them how to do it... ✓

Linda Robinson



Jeff Robinson

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*Jay Miner, father of
the Amiga, passed
away on June 20,
1994. Remember
him when you turn on
your Amiga.*

Amiga Library News

public domain and shareware picks
from Bill Raecke

Yours truly has had a busy month. Not only is the newsletter a week late, there are only eight club disks for the month. I'll try to do better in both respects next month. But despite the small quantity, this month's disks contain things well worth adding to your collection.

ClipArt

On MCCC-A_715 you'll find a small collection of clipart with a golfing theme. It is this month's clipart that graces the pages of this newsletter.

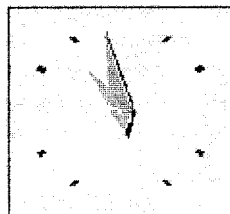
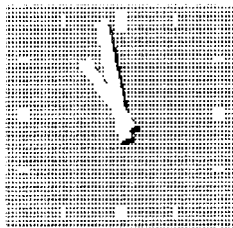
Clock 1.2 by Peter Schachte

Titlebar clocks used to appear on disks almost every month. It seems that trend has died, perhaps because people ran out of ideas on how to improve what had gone before. Not letting that deter him, Peter Schachte has come up with perhaps the ultimate titlebar clock. It has several things to recommend it. First is the look. It looks the way a titlebar clock should look on 2.0 and greater systems. It has the 3D border AND it has 3D borders between major items on the clock, i.e. between the time and memory functions. Second is the configurability. YOU decide exactly what you want displayed in your clock. Date, time, day of week (all in various formats), free memory (K or bytes — total or chip & fast). There is even an option to show the largest contiguous chunk of memory (chip and/or fast). I find this to be a very nice addition. But the configurability doesn't end there. You also have control over what colors are used — both for the background and text. And each item's color can be different if you so desire (up to the limit of your Workbench's colors, of course). The only option he forgot was a way to disable the automatic pop-to-the-front feature. Maybe in a later version... Anyway, you'll want to check this one out. It's on MCCC-A_716.

TolleUhr by Matthias Fleischer

While we're on the subject of clocks, here is another gotta-have-it model. This is different in that it is an

analogue clock rather than a titlebar clock. Think of it as a replacement for the standard clock that came with your Amiga. No memory or date displays here — just the time. The options are for seconds on or off, a chime function and, of course, an alarm. But what sets this one apart are the looks. This looks like a 2.0 clock should look. And better still, the looks are totally configurable. You can modify colors of everything, including background, hand outline and fill colors (each hand is separately controlled), and the hour markers. You can have markers for just 12 o'clock, quarter markers (12, 3, 6 and 9), hour markers or minutes. You can have a border around your clock if you like — or a double border — or no border at all (and, of course, you can control the color of the border). You can even control the shape and width of the hour and minute hands. The options are line, triangle, rhombus and rectangle. And you can have the hands cast a shadow if you like. And you can specify a pattern for the clock background if you like. And you can specify if you want the hour markers in a round (equidistant from the center) or oval (stretched to more completely fill the clock face) configuration. And... well never mind. Just get it, spend some time (lots of time) playing with the settings, save the configuration you're happiest with, and throw away that old, boring clock that came with your Amiga. TolleUhr is on MCCC-A_717.



Pictures

Anyone who collects pictures will be happy to see disks MCCC-A_719 and MCCC-A_720. On them are a collection of art from some of the masters. There are standard IFF versions and JPEG versions included. The quality is excellent. Check 'em out. ✓

Commodore Update

the latest news from the Amiga World hotline
by Dan Sullivan

Hi, it's Tuesday, June 28. This is Dan Sullivan, Editor in Chief of *Amiga World*. This is an update of my last message of June 15th. If you haven't called before, background information will follow the update.

We've learned that the deadline for all bids to purchase Commodore's holdings must be received in writing and with cash deposits to guarantee them by the trustees administering the Commodore liquidation by July 15th. Again, we are legally prohibited from disclosing the identities any of the groups who are bidding. However, at least one of the groups has already complied with the July 15th deadline. Others may or may not follow. This particular group, as well as several other of the half dozen interested parties, has expressed their intention of resuming production and distribution of current Amiga systems, the A4000, the A1200 and CD32, and the development of new Amiga technology in the future. I will update this hotline number as soon as any announcement is made. How long after the July 15th deadline such an announcement will be made is not possible to predict at this time. All parties involved, however, realize time is of the essence. We hope to have word to you within a week to two weeks after that deadline. You can call *Amiga World* on the toll free 800-441-4403 line and ask for extension 365 or the Commodore Update. Or you can call directly to that line at 603-924-0365. Again, it will probably be a week or two after July 15th before we have any word on the situation.

Now, if you haven't called before, let me briefly fill you in. The Commodore liquidation proceedings have been taking place in the Supreme Court of the Bahamas where Commodore International is incorporated. Trustees appointed by that court have contacted parties interested in purchasing the company, with proceeds going to pay off Commodore's creditors. We have learned that approximately six groups have expressed an interest.

We will continue to report on these proceedings on this hotline and in the magazine. Thank you for your interest and patience. All the best.

Wednesday, June 15, this is Dan Sullivan, the Editor of *AmigaWorld*. If you've called before, this is an update of previous messages concerning the Commodore situation.

At the end of last week, hearings resumed in the liquidation proceedings of Commodore. *Amiga World* sent one of its reporters to Nassau to cover the hearings of the Bahamian Supreme Court. While we were tracking previously, negotiations between Commodore and Samsung, the Korean electronics giant, about the acquisition of Commodore, no deal was struck during last week's proceedings. Instead, *Amiga World* has learned that bids for the acquisition of Commodore from at least six other parties were tendered to the court appointed trustee in charge of the Commodore liquidation.

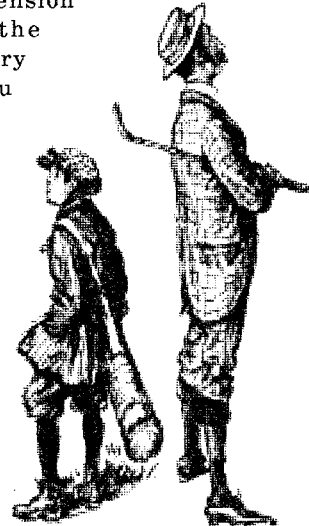
Such interest in the Amiga manufacturer is definitely not a bad thing.

Absolute legal constraints of these proceedings prevent the disclosure of the identities of any of the parties bidding for the purchase of Commodore. However, from conversations with several of our sources, two things seem clear; the evaluation of these bids AND the resolution of Commodore's operations should take place within the next one to two weeks. AND that decision should occur and be announced in the U.S., not in the Bahamas.

The information I am relaying here will be reported in the issue of *Amiga World* that is just going to press now, Aug 94. However, as soon as further news is available, perhaps within one to two weeks of this message, I will update our hotline immediately.

If you are calling back and are not using our 800 number, please do. It is 800-441-4403. Ask for the Commodore Update, or extension 365. The next issue of the magazine, Sept 94, will carry full details. Again, thank you for your interest and patience. All the best.

...Dan Sullivan



Thought For The Month

Water, taken in moderation, cannot hurt anybody.
...Mark Twain

CHAPTER NEWS

Amiga By-The-Loop

Ben Clingerman

Hello everyone. I bet you thought Amiga By-The-Loop had vanished. No, we are still meeting every second Tuesday at 7:30 in the North Richland Hills Community Center — we just seem to have misplaced our secretary somewhere.

At this month's (June) meeting, Jeff Robinson of J.L. Robinson & Associates, a vinyl sign making company from Keller who is also a ABL member, demonstrated the Amiga program, *SignEngine*. *SignEngine* allows you to import vector graphics from programs such as *PageStream* or *Art Expressions* and allows you to crop, rotate, enlarge, stretch and then plot out to devices such as laser cutters or HP plotters to create poster size graphics or even billboard size cut outs or print outs a la *Art Department's* type posterise function. You can separate pen colors for multi-color plotters or single color cutter plotters. Jeff plotted out a graphic which was about fourteen inches in height onto posterboard of a light bulb over the word Amiga in one color which was impressive to watch and was nice to view when completed. *SignEngine* runs about \$299 which, from what Jeff says, is only a tenth of what the same program costs on the PC or Mac. Thanks, Jeff, and also Jeff's wife Linda, for sharing it with us.

In the past few months we have had demonstrations from Scott Lamb showing us his nicely done *Operation Combat II*, Harold Williams with a great demo on *Final Writer* and a demo of CD-32 I showed along with the MPeg player. Thank you everyone for your support and help with these presentations.

With all the confusion and rumors that are flying about the Amiga and Commodore, your local chapter is the best place to go for help on current hardware and

software problems. Don't be dismayed with all the talk as there will be a hard-core group of Amiga support from these chapters to help you with any questions that you may have.

Next month is a demo of Calagari 24 and we hope you can attend the meeting. Have an Amiga day!

Amiga Central

Johnny Kitchens

With only half of the year gone, 1994 certainly has shaped up to be a year to remember. On one hand we have our computer company that stopped running and on the other we have a man making news by running. What a world!

This month Scott called our meeting to order, with the word that there were no new words on Commodore. Disturbing news of Dave Haynie joining Scala came up. Just imagining the Amiga without his handywork is a bit hard to accept. After that we had lots of talk on what going on and what it means. Some of the questions were very good. Someone asked if the copyrights were still valid. We found out that the warranties were still being upheld by SMG. The AAA chipset hasn't been a valid project for Commodore for over 2 years. I guess they were just hyping it all this time. Will we ever hear the truth on Commodore?

When will *PageStream 3.0* show up? Just keep saying 4 to 6 weeks and you'll be right.

We got a few interesting questions to test the experts. Someone was having a problem with *ParNet* on a 4000 and a CDTV. I hope we cured it for them. A question on a MOD creator for the Amiga was next. There's one on the Fred Fish collection. How lucky for that guy. Does everyone know that a version of *LightWave* is available for

non-Toaster users? If you are interested in the Raptor, you should have been at the meeting. David Johnson gave a very impressive description of it and its capabilities.

Our main presentation, was for Interactive Training Tools made with *CanDo!* from INOVAtronics. Our presenters were David Johnson and Ken Purcell. They work for ARCO creating these tools which are used all over the world. Imagine getting paid to work on the Amiga! It boggles the mind...as did their presentation. They combine live video, computer graphics, and animations to create training videos for such things as oil well operation, oil pump maintenance, and offshore oil well operations. Their setup uses a 4000 and laser disc player to give the operator a feeling for being on location for the training sessions. The really exciting thing to see was the controls on the equipment. Click on a switch, lever, or knob and it moves and does what it's supposed to do. This is where *CanDo* came into the picture. Using *CanDo* in a multimedia setup is just one of the reasons for its existence. If you missed this meeting you once again missed an opportunity to see the Amiga shine. Something the Amiga may have needed all along.

We ended everything by giving away a door prize. There was a happy person who was glad they came!

Amiga North Dallas

Genny White

Gee, I love it when we spend a night reviewing something I really understand!

I'll get to that in a minute, but first, the news:

[]

That was it... we're all still waiting for word about the future of C= products. There were not even

CHAPTER NEWS

any juicy rumors, and not much Q&A, either. Danny Barnett was looking for suggestions on capturing an elusive sound sample, someone was looking for a 1084S monitor, someone else had trouble getting "Font Hints" to work in PostScript with an HP Laserjet II emulator (many suggestions hardware and software were offered), a person experiencing the SCSI bus locking up using an NEC CD ROM reader was advised to just "wait it out", and Ned Kelly had a floppy drive difficulty (dies near the end of a copy) which set off a flood of technical gobbledygook from my spouse Danny. (I think Ned understood him... I just married him, I can't explain him.) One big announcement/reminder: Our July meeting will be on the **4th Tuesday**, July 26th. Our special guest will be Scott Lamb, presenting the *Combat II* war simulator! Sounds like fun... be there!

On with the above mentioned great product review: our good friend David Marshall presented the latest version of *Deluxe Music* by Electronic Arts. This upgrade (*Deluxe Music II*) has been out since around August of last year, but I hadn't had a chance to check it out. It'll run on most anything, even 1.3 DOS, and sells for \$120. For those who have not seen *Deluxe Music* before, it is an elaborate music entry and playing package that has the traditional composer in mind. As a compositional tool, I feel it never had an equal, although several other packages were great for performance. What I liked most was the ability to enter sheet music as written, on multiple staves, with changes in tempo, dynamics, key signature,

etc. all appearing and occurring as ol' Beethoven imagined. The old package had ALMOST everything I needed to reproduce and orchestrate any music I loved. Now, I think it can do it all. For the musicians among you, wallow with me in the freedom to use 5th and 7ths, ppp and fff, double-dotted notes and 64th notes on up to 48 staves variously bracketed together. For those who have the original and are irritated by having a lot of pull-down menus instead of buttons, gripe no more: now most of the most commonly used options are part of a toolbox on the screen, including play/play section/stop (space bar pauses!), 3 popular note play styles, and flipping of note stems. To help you know what you're doing, a title bar shows you the note and octave you are

hovering over before you put that note permanently in the score, and key signature handling is much improved. Alto and tenor clefs have been added. The printing capabilities are vastly improved, using a higher resolution font. Even text editing (for adding lyrics, etc.) is some improved. The package comes with over 20 instruments, and a much better way of handling and assigning them to parts on an entirely new instrument screen. You can play on your MIDI and record your work for editing, or load in other formats for re-orchestration. There's ARexx support and macro recording, and you can now have multiple songs open at once for cutting and pasting. But wait! You Also Get (I hate those commercials) a stand-alone player! I could go on, but you get the idea.

Now I'm waiting for *Deluxe Music III*, when you can just scan in the sheet music... well, we can dream!

David also mentioned the incredible *OctaMED 5* (runs on 2.0 and up — level 4 runs on 1.3), which can "fake" 8 voices at once (thus the name). It can do pitch-bending and other things you just can't do in *Deluxe Music*, but it can't do triplets! It's got a sample editor, and can show "oscilloscopes" for each voice (up to 16 with MIDI), and can make some really awesome sounds. It's only \$56, but there's a considerable learning curve for the entry and editing method. Personally, I'll stick with *Deluxe Music* for my purposes, but for game sounds or really high-tech music, *OctaMED* has much to offer. David, it's always a joy to have you with us. Great product! Great demo!



CHAPTER NEWS

Metro C-64/128

Brenda Sessums

Hello, Metro C-64/128 Users! Twelve people made it in to this month's meeting. We had hoped to have more show since we now have 31 members on the books for our chapter. Wow! Membership just keeps growing.

If you didn't make the meeting, you missed door prizes, *Print Shop* and *Loadstar* demos, and a great Commodore Flea Market. Rick Sealy brought a bunch of C-64 and C-128 software, hardware and books to sell. He's not getting out of Commodore, he still has plenty of equipment and software. These were just some extras he had laying around.

Speaking of flea markets, we pretty much ruled out going to First Saturday, the computer and electronics flea market in Dallas. Most everybody agreed that they didn't want to get up at 5 a.m. to go! However, we did discuss maybe getting together later one Saturday afternoon to carpool to Software Etc. in Allen and see what wondrous Commodore bargains we can find. Let Jo Lynn know if you want to go. We will probably firm things up by the next meeting or two.

Our grand demonstration this month was on *Print Shop* and came from our two-year veteran member, Jack Tarvin. (It's good to see more member participation. If YOU have something you would like to share with fellow members in a short presentation, everyone would love to see it!)

For the demonstration, Jack used Jo Lynn's 128 in 64 mode, and Brenda's Okidata 120 printer (after clearing out the cat hair!). Jack has been using an MPS-801, but has had nothing but trouble with it. (After the meeting, he bought a Star printer from Commodore Country and just loves it!) And speaking of printer problems, Jack told us that if you are

getting a dull-looking printout, you can spray WD-40 on the ribbon and get a bright printout — although, don't use too much or you have an inky mess!

Jack said Commodore Country has *Print Shop* for a reasonable price. After all, at a buck or more for commercial, less personal cards, *Print Shop* pays for itself in no time just with birthdays and holidays. Stationary or office supply stores should have the envelopes for mailing your creations.

To load up *Print Shop*, Jack typed in 'Load "PS", 8'. He started out with a custom card. After choosing a real neat script font, Jack selected a custom graphics layout where he put the graphics just where he wanted them. He then wrote his message, and placed his monicker on the back with the "Give yourself credit" selection. Some of his friends thought he and his wife went into the card business since "Jack and Jean's Card Shop" was printed on the back! (Hey, another good money maker? Hmmm...) On the final screen before printing, another selection lets you line up the printer paper to make sure your card will be centered properly for folding. Just make sure the dashed lines it prints are directly on the page break, and centered from left to right.

While we waited for the card to print, Jack showed us some samples he already printed and how to fold them. You can use *Print Shop* for cards, banners, signs and letterheads. One letterhead Jack showed us was for the "Hereford Ranch." Someone inferred that even though Jack doesn't have cows any more, he still has plenty of bull! Jack also showed us a little about the "Graphic Editor" and "Screen Magic" features of *Print Shop*. The "Graphic Editor" lets you edit or create graphics by pixel on a grid. "Screen Magic" had several features, including a kaleidoscope display. You can watch and change the patterns it creates, as

well as freeze the screen and save it to a file for creating a card. Now that's neat!

Well, we learned that *Print Shop* is fast and easy to use. Everything is explained right on the screen, but the manual does have more details. If the program hangs, you might try turning off the printer first. That will usually free up the program so you don't have to reboot your computer. As for graphics, *Print Shop* comes with a variety of them (about 20, I think). The club library also has a few hundred you can add to it!

Jack also showed us a program, *Label Maker* he downloaded from the MCCC BBS. However, that demonstration was cut short by a lightning-quick thunderstorm that turned the power off for us. A few other members made a mad dash down the stair well to roll up their windows. Squishy car seats are not as great as you might think!

Brenda demonstrated *Klondike* and *Mahjong* from the "Loadstar 120" disk magazine. Both are fun, keyboard-operated card games. The disk also had *Form Maker* which Brenda said is the easiest form template program she ever saw. With *Loadstar*, you get two disks packed on both sides each month.

We had four great door prizes donated by members. Jack won *Jane 128*, a word processor and spreadsheet donated by Jo Lynn. Hershel Hoover won the Alphacon 42 printer and 40 column paper donated by Rick. (Hershel was also holding Clyde Masey's ticket while he was out of the room. Hmmm...) John McHugh won *Multiphan 64* donated by Mary Louise. (Of course, Mary Louise won it in the first draw. That thing just didn't want to part with her company!) Lastly, Mary Louise won a "Super Sketch" drawing tablet donated by Rick.

Join us next month for more fun and informative demos, prizes and a real good time!

The Fine Print

The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club

Statement of Purpose: The Metroplex Commodore Computer Club is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the collection and dissemination of computer knowledge, to the encouragement of computer education, and to the use of Commodore computers in the home, at school, and in business.

Legal Stuff: The MCCC is not connected with Commodore Business Machines, Inc. Commodore and Commodore product names (PET, CBM, VIC, C64, C128, and Amiga) are registered trademarks of Commodore, Inc.

Meetings and Membership: Our meetings are open to all. Family membership dues are \$24 per year or \$15 for six months, and entitle the member to a monthly mailed copy of the MCCC News, free access to the club's extensive public domain and shareware software library, and discounts at many area merchants. An additional \$12 annual fee provides access to the MCCC multi-user Bulletin Board System.

The MCCC News

Copyright Information: Material printed in the MCCC News is not copyrighted unless so noted. Articles may be reprinted or otherwise distributed by other user groups or by individuals who may find it helpful as long as proper credit is given to the author and to the MCCC.

Advertising: The MCCC News accepts two kinds of advertising. Member ads are those which are submitted by a member and which are not of a commercial nature. There is no charge for member ads. Commercial ads are those which advertise multiple like items for sale. Rates for camera-ready commercial ads are as follows for a single month or (prepaid consecutive three months): Full Page — \$36 (\$96); Half Page — \$18 (\$48); Quarter Page — \$12 (\$32); Business Card — \$6 (\$16). Materials to be inserted will cost \$.08 per copy (duplication not included) and must be inserted into all newsletters for the month.

Articles: Members are encouraged to submit articles. Articles may be submitted as ASCII text or in Amiga *excellence!*, *ProWrite*, *WordPerfect* or *Final Copy* format. They may be uploaded to the MCCC BBS, to StarText, or submitted on disk. If these methods are not possible, I will, as a last resort, accept printed articles. If graphics need to be included they may be submitted as IFF files, DR2D, *PageStream* or *Art Expressions* structured drawings, *Professional Draw* clips or, again as a last resort, printed output.

Deadline: The deadline for submissions to the MCCC News is 7am of the fourth Saturday of each month. Payment must accompany all ad copy. Make checks payable to MCCC and mail c/o Bill Raecke, 2614 Charolais Way, Arlington, Texas 76017.

Extra Copies: Extra Copies of the MCCC News are available at \$1 per copy. Orders should be forwarded with the required fee by the regular newsletter deadline.

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Secretary	Brenda Sessums	817-238-9891
Librarian	Phil Heberer	817-847-8232

Normal Meeting Schedule

1st Tuesday	MCCC Board of Directors
2nd Tuesday	Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
2nd Saturday	Metro C-64/128 Chapter
3rd Tuesday	Amiga North Dallas Chapter
3rd Thursday	Amiga Central Chapter

SIGS

VidSIG	Chuck Johnson	817-478-7313
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 5 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

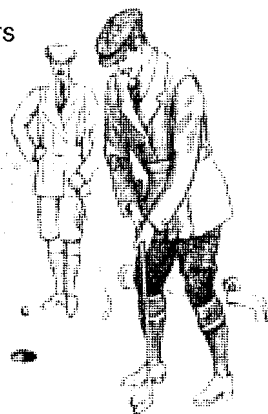
July 9 Metro C-64/128 Chapter
1:30 pm — Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine
Lancaster & Camp Bowie, Fort Worth

July 12 Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter
7:30 pm — N.Richland Hills Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow, N.Richland Hills

July 21 Amiga Central Chapter
7:30 pm — Arlington Community Center
2800 S. Center, Arlington

July 26 Amiga North Dallas Chapter
7:30 pm — King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 LBJ Freeway, Dallas

Aug 2 MCCC Board of Directors
7:30 pm
N.Richland Hills
Community Center
Loop 820 at Rufe Snow
North Richland Hills



August Newsletter Deadline — 7am, July 30

These Dealers offer discounts to MCCC members
Be sure to show your membership card

ANSOFT Data Systems

Amiga Software & Hardware
2801 W. 7th Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76107
(817) 870-2529

Commodore Country

C-64, C-128 & Amiga Software
1420 County Road 914
Burleson, Texas 76028
(817) 295-7658

Metropolitan Computer

Amiga Software, Hardware & Repair
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